

# **A Qualitative Exploration of AB 705 Implementation: Report of Statewide Interview Results**

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# Executive Summary

As of fall 2019, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office required all California community colleges (CCC) to be in compliance with Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705). CCC were required to implement multiple measures placement policies<sup>1</sup> for math and English that would maximize the likelihood that students with an educational goal of degree or transfer complete English and math requirements appropriate to their goal within a one-year timeframe. Though not legally mandated by AB 705, colleges are also addressing equity gaps that developed and persisted under the previous assessment testing and placement model.<sup>2</sup>

## Project Overview

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group), in partnership with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, interviewed colleges throughout the state that were identified as scheduling either a higher percentage (an average of 80% or more) or a lower percentage (65% or fewer) of their English and math courses at transfer level in fall 2019.<sup>3</sup> Colleges were selected from a stratified random sample of all California Community Colleges within each of the seven [Vision for Success](#) regions.

## Methodology and Research Questions

The RP Group's Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) research team conducted interviews via Zoom with 83 individuals from 14 colleges who played a key role in AB 705 implementation.<sup>4</sup>

The interviews were structured around the following research questions:

1. How did colleges determine the placement rules they are currently using? What influenced their decisions?
2. What are the most positive outcomes of AB 705 implementation that colleges have experienced thus far?

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<sup>1</sup> Multiple measures means that colleges incorporate two or more criteria for assessment and placement. In California, the term "multiple measures" has come to be closely associated with placement based exclusively on the use of high school performance information such as grades in specific courses and overall high school GPA; standardized testing is no longer approved for use in English and math placement, though it is still allowed in ESL. For more information see <https://assessment.cccco.edu/what-are-multiple-measures>.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to AB 705, standardized tests were the primary placement method to determine first-time students' starting level in math, English, and/or English as a Second Language (cf. <http://bit.ly/Assessment-Scan-2014>, <http://bit.ly/DF3-Burdman-2015>). Research shows that standardized tests underestimate the likelihood of a student succeeding in transfer-level coursework, underplacing students into pre-transfer courses and slowing down students' academic progress (cf. <http://bit.ly/Improving-Placement-2019>, <http://bit.ly/Predicting-Success-2012>, <http://bit.ly/Ngo-Redundant-Math-2019>).

<sup>3</sup> Colleges' percentage of fall 2019 transfer-level coursework per *Getting There II: Are California community colleges maximizing student completion of transfer-level math and English? A Statewide Progress Report on Implementation of AB 705* (<https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Getting-There-II-FINAL.pdf>).

<sup>4</sup> See the Appendix for further details on the methodology used in this research study.

3. What are the greatest challenges colleges have faced with their implementation of AB 705?
4. What is the overall belief at the colleges in student capacity to succeed in transfer-level English and math courses?
5. How are colleges supporting students in transfer-level courses? Does any one method seem to be working better than others?
6. How are colleges addressing equity gaps in transfer-level courses with regards to enrollment and throughput?<sup>5</sup>

## Summary of Key Findings

Below is a summary of the key findings from the interviews conducted, organized by research question.

### 1. How Colleges Determined the Placement Rules They Are Currently Using

Interviewees noted that in order to select the placement rules currently in use, most colleges created an interdisciplinary AB 705 task force or committee to lead the planning and implementation efforts. Interviewees reported that colleges' placement decisions were influenced by statewide data, including the default placement rates and findings from the [Multiple Measures Assessment Project \(MMAP\)](#). At 11 institutions, discipline faculty were given the deciding vote about the placement rules, and the administration backed the math and English departments' decisions.

### 2. Most Positive Outcomes of AB 705 Implementation Thus Far

#### IMPROVED ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Across colleges, interviewees consistently indicated that the most positive outcome of AB 705 thus far is the increase in key student academic outcomes such as access, success, and throughput. English faculty also saw an increase in the number of students attempting the second transfer-level course in the English sequence.

#### INCREASES IN STUDENT-CENTEREDNESS

Colleges reported that the new placement process is "simpler" and "less confusing" for students. Colleges are also providing students with immediate placement results, allowing students to enroll more quickly in English and math courses. Moreover, counselors involved in the guided placement process said that the initial counseling sessions are more "student-centered," with richer discussions about students' educational goals and pathways, especially for STEM students.

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<sup>5</sup> Throughput is a metric used to evaluate the percentage of a starting cohort that completes a target gateway course within a specified period of time.

## INCREASED COLLABORATION

Colleges reported an increase in communication and collaboration amongst faculty within and between disciplines and departments as a result of AB 705 implementation. Colleges that provided faculty with professional development in preparation for AB 705 cited an increase in faculty buy-in.

## DEVELOPMENT OF NEW STRATEGIES

The development of support courses, along with an increase in conversations about student support, were two of the most positive effects of AB 705 according to interviewees. Colleges that participated in pre-AB 705 placement and/or basic skills reform initiatives focused on shortening the basic skills sequences and increasing support (e.g., [California Acceleration Project](#), ESL curriculum integration, BSSOT) reported a higher level of buy-in amongst faculty.

# 3. Greatest Implementation Challenges

## ENSURING SUFFICIENT BUY-IN

All the colleges interviewed, except one, reported the presence of faculty and classified professionals who continue to challenge the effectiveness of AB 705 and believe that some students are not ready for transfer-level coursework. A common concern expressed is that the students have challenges that students at other colleges do not have, and therefore, statewide AB 705 default placement rules do not serve their students well.

## PROVIDING STUDENT SUPPORT

Some interviewees described difficulty in ensuring students have all the supports they need, including wraparound services. Almost all the colleges reported that finding, training, and scheduling tutors is challenging. Furthermore, colleges reported that if a support course is optional, many students are choosing not to take it.

## OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Some interviewees described college policies or procedures that created barriers for students. For example, many colleges reported challenges with credit ESL placement, where students receive an English placement and then must seek out ESL information, if desired. Multiple colleges also reported challenges with scheduling corequisite support sections when the sections are not linked in the registration system.

## AVAILABILITY OF DATA

Some of the colleges reported timely access to data as a challenge. Faculty need to know what is working and not working in order to make needed adjustments as soon as possible, but they often receive data when the opportunity to act has passed, if at all.

## COMMUNICATION

Lastly, colleges are challenged with informing prospective students, their parents, feeder high schools, and the surrounding community about AB 705. Especially difficult is ensuring that students are receiving the correct information from every source.

### 4. Overall Belief in Student Capacity to Succeed in Transfer-Level Courses

#### A NEW CONVERSATION

Although AB 705 was only recently implemented, interviewees noted that the conversation on their campuses has already changed. Students now hear that they can enter transfer-level courses right away, and those who feel underprepared or uncertain in their abilities are reassured that they are capable and will receive the support they need from the college in order to succeed.

#### CONCURRENT SUPPORT AND WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Many colleges reported that students are capable of successfully completing transfer-level math and English in their first year if they have the necessary support. Concurrent support, corequisites, and institutional infrastructure were cited as key supports being made available to students.

#### LOWERING THE BAR?

At the same time, some interviewees remain concerned that attempts to ensure that more students pass transfer-level courses within their first year will result in a reduction in academic standards, with some faculty fearing that they may be setting their students up for failure.

### 5. Approaches to Supporting Students in Transfer-Level Courses

For most colleges that offered corequisite courses, these courses were credit classes, usually one to two units; however, other institutions offered noncredit support courses. Instructors saw an increase in retention when the support course was treated as an extension of the lecture and classroom activities, not just a time for answering questions about homework or discussing study skills.

### 6. Addressing Equity Gaps in Transfer-Level Course Enrollment and Throughput

Interviewees indicated that access to transfer-level courses has improved. Many student groups disproportionately impacted by equity issues have seen an increase in completion and success rates. However, it is important to note that equity gaps persist at many colleges.<sup>6</sup> Interviewees also described how AB 705 has contributed to a greater focus on equity than ever before.

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<sup>6</sup> Statewide one-term throughput rates for transfer-level English and transfer-level math increased for all ethnic groups in fall 2019 under AB 705 compared to fall 2018 pre-AB 705; however, the Multiple Measures Assessment project (MMAP) reported that equity gaps persist in fall 2019. Source: MMAP. (2020). *Executing AB 705: Does it Work for All?* The RP Group. Presented at the Strengthening Student Success Conference, October 2, 2020. [https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Conferences/StudentSuccess/2020SSSCMaterials/2020\\_Session\\_Materials/Oct\\_02\\_SessionMaterials/ExecutingAB705DoesItWorkforAll.pdf?ver=2020-11-07-092433-343](https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Conferences/StudentSuccess/2020SSSCMaterials/2020_Session_Materials/Oct_02_SessionMaterials/ExecutingAB705DoesItWorkforAll.pdf?ver=2020-11-07-092433-343)).

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from these interviews, the RP Group offers the following recommendations to colleges that are working to improve their AB 705 implementation in ways that result in greater student success and reduced equity gaps.

1. Ensure that equity is a key consideration in every decision.
2. Address faculty and staff concerns.
3. Make professional development available to all faculty, including part-time faculty.
4. Streamline processes to make them as simple, accessible, and student-centered as possible.
5. Collect and analyze feedback related to AB 705 to understand how it can be improved.
6. Facilitate communication and collaboration among faculty, both within and across disciplines.
7. Devote resources to making meaningful data available campus-wide in a timely manner.
8. Support a shift in culture that highlights students' college-readiness.
9. Commit at all levels to equitable placement and closing equity gaps.

## Conclusion

The findings from this study provide insight into the impact of AB 705 on colleges at different levels of implementation across the state, beyond what can be observed in the quantitative outcomes. These statewide interviews bring to light important ideas and considerations on how to advance implementation moving forward and provide an opportunity for colleges to express some of the ways in which the state can support their implementation efforts.



# Introduction

As of fall 2019, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office required all California community colleges (CCC) to be in compliance with [Assembly Bill 705 \(AB 705\)](#). CCC were required to implement multiple measures placement policies for math and English that would maximize the likelihood that students with an educational goal of degree or transfer complete English and math requirements appropriate to their goal within a one-year timeframe. Though not legally mandated by AB 705, colleges are also addressing equity gaps that developed and persisted under the previous assessment testing and placement model.

## Project Overview

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group) Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) research team, in partnership with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, interviewed colleges throughout the state that were identified as scheduling either an average of 80% or more, or 65% or fewer English and math courses at transfer-level in fall 2019.<sup>7</sup> Colleges were selected from a stratified random sample of all California Community Colleges within each of the seven Vision for Success regions.

The purpose of these interviews was to better understand the factors that influence varying levels of and approaches to implementation of AB 705. Findings from the interviews are intended to inform the Chancellor's Office and colleges across the state of the challenges and needs that have resulted from the implementation of AB 705, as well as identify promising results and practices to support colleges in their efforts to continuously improve student outcomes and lessen equity gaps.

## Research Questions

The interviews were structured around the following research questions:

1. How did colleges determine the placement rules they are currently using? What influenced their decisions?
2. What are the most positive outcomes of AB 705 thus far?
3. What are the greatest challenges colleges have faced with their implementation of AB 705?
4. What is the overall belief in student capacity to succeed in transfer-level English and math courses?
5. How are colleges supporting students in transfer-level courses? Does any one method seem to be working better than others?
6. How are colleges addressing equity gaps in transfer-level courses with regards to enrollment and throughput?

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<sup>7</sup> Colleges' percentage of fall 2019 transfer-level coursework per Hern, K. (2019). Getting There II: Are California community colleges maximizing student completion of transfer-level math and English? A Statewide Progress Report on Implementation of AB 705. Sacramento, CA: Campaign for College Opportunity & California Acceleration Project. Retrieved from <https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Getting-There-II-FINAL.pdf>.

## In This Report

This report begins with a summary of the key findings organized by the following research domains: placement rules, positive outcomes, challenges with implementation, student capacity to succeed, student support, and equity gaps. The subsequent section provides detailed information on the findings, including an overview of the major themes identified within each research domain. The final section includes recommendations on how colleges can advance their AB 705 implementation efforts, a discussion of the limitations of the findings, and a conclusion that describes the significance of the insights gained within the context of assessment and placement in California Community Colleges. Finally, an appendix describes in detail the research methodology used for this project.

## Key Findings

This section provides a detailed description of the findings from a qualitative analysis of interviews with community college faculty, staff, and administrators about AB 705 implementation. The findings include colleges' decisions around current placement rules, positive outcomes of AB 705 implementation, challenges with implementation, approaches to supporting students in transfer-level courses, perceptions about students' capacity to succeed at transfer-level, and addressing equity gaps. Excerpts from interviews are included to provide direct access to the voices behind AB 705 implementation.<sup>8</sup>

### Decisions around Placement Rules

One of the first questions discussed with interviewees was how their colleges determined which placement rules to implement. According to their remarks, most colleges created an interdisciplinary AB 705 task force or committee to lead the planning and implementation efforts. The committees were led by an administrator and/or faculty member from math, English, or English as a Second Language (ESL). Committee membership included faculty from counseling, math, English, and ESL, instructional deans, administrators from instruction and student services, researchers, assessment/placement staff, and members of the student equity committee. Some colleges noted overlap between members of the AB 705 and Guided Pathways committees, including members of the Developmental Education Workgroup.

“ AB 705 data discussions included math and English faculty, administrators, and researchers from all colleges in the district. The research office was involved in the process of weighing the pros and cons of [using default placement rules or localized placement rules], including an explanation of the data needed if local rules were to be used. ... Going with the default placement rules was a quick decision. Our college, compared to the other colleges in the district, felt most prepared to follow the default placement rules. ”

—Research Analyst

<sup>8</sup> Quotes from colleges who offered 65% or fewer of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 appear in navy blue text boxes. Quotes from colleges who offered 80% or more of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 appear in light teal text boxes.

“Math faculty agreed that it would be difficult to increase students’ likelihood of completing transfer-level math within one year if students were required to start with algebra. ”

—Math Department Chair

Most multi-college districts reported that planning meetings happened at the district level, with representatives from each campus involved in the development of district-wide placement rules. **In the end, most colleges reported that discipline faculty had the deciding vote about the placement rules and the administration backed the English and math departments’ decisions.**

## State and Local Data

**All colleges reported that their placement decisions were influenced by statewide data,** including the default placement rules presented in the [July 2018 AB 705 Implementation Memo](#) from the Chancellor’s Office, data from the [Multiple Measures Assessment Project \(MMAP\)](#), and webinars held by the [Chancellor’s Office](#) and [the RP Group](#). Most of the colleges compiled local data to compare to the default placement rates. Colleges examined local placement and throughput rates by starting level for different populations. Some colleges with access to high school performance data during the AB 705 planning stage looked at different high school GPA cutoff points for the support requirement/recommendation. **Faculty reported having “thoughtful discussions about data and outcomes” and “in-depth conversations about the factors that influence student success.”**

## California Acceleration Project and ESL Skills Integration Participation

Placement decisions for colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 were greatly influenced by prior initiatives focused on shortening the basic skills sequences and increasing support in math, English, and ESL. Colleges who participated in the [California Acceleration Project \(CAP\)](#) eliminated all levels except one-level-below in math and English prior to AB 705. ESL departments at most of these colleges simplified and shortened ESL course sequences prior to AB 705 by integrating writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills into one class. Most of these colleges said [Basic Skills Student Outcomes and Transformations \(BSSOT\)](#) grants, Title V grants, or programs aimed at bolstering support for underprepared students helped colleges feel more confident in their decision to use the default placement rules and scale-up support efforts piloted through the grants.

“Our department eliminated two-levels-below transfer with CAP before AB 705. The curriculum for two-levels below was used to create the corequisite support course for one-level below. The English department used the same method to remove one-level-below for AB 705. Going with the default placement rules was an easy decision. The department felt confident going through the process again. We repackaged the existing noncredit support course for English 1A using the curriculum from one-level-below. All tutors and faculty were re-trained to teach transfer-level English composition. ”

—English Department Chair

Many colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 were reportedly “already using placement rules similar to AB 705” or “moving in that direction prior to the law.” Some of the institutions piloted corequisite support courses two to three years before implementing AB 705. These colleges reported that implementing AB 705 in fall 2019 was a “smooth process” and the decrease in pre-transfer enrollments over the last few years made eliminating pre-transfer “a natural next step even without the law.” Lessons learned from eliminating two and three levels below prior to AB 705 were used to eliminate one level below transfer.

“[The] English [department] used what was learned from eliminating remedial courses through CAP to meet AB 705.

—English Department Chair

Using the default placement rules allowed us to simplify things—all students can automatically enroll in transfer-level with corequisite support.

—Math Faculty

Math and English faculty conducted a curriculum gap analysis comparing high school classes to transfer-level. Faculty were confident students could start in transfer-level and be successful. ”

—Research Analyst

All seven of the colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 are using the default placement rules for English and math. These colleges reported one or more of the following factors led to the decision to use the default placement rules. First, six of the colleges (86%) reported that the data presented with **the default placement rules were “convincing enough” to choose the default rules.** Second, five of the colleges (71%) said past work in shortening basic skills sequences through **acceleration and ESL integration led to structural changes that supported AB 705 implementation** and gave colleges “the confidence to eliminate all pre-transfer courses and go with the default placement rules.” Third, four of the colleges (57%) reported that **using the default placement rules would be “easier” or a “safer bet”** compared to using a local placement method. Finally,

four of the colleges (57%) reported that **discipline faculty examined the skills needed for “college readiness”** to enter each course and felt students could start at transfer-level and gain the skills needed to be successful during the added time in the support course.

Among the seven colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019, six institutions (86%) reported that they are using the default placement rules for English and/or math. However, most of these colleges are continuing to offer pre-transfer courses into which counselors can guide students and students can self-place. When math and English faculty at these colleges were asked about the factors that influenced their decisions to go with the default placement rules, five of the six colleges (83%) found the **data presented with the default placement rules sufficiently convincing**, and four of the colleges (67%) reported that using the **default rules was easier than using and validating local placement rules—**

“The plan is to collect one to two years’ worth of data using the default rules. The college wants to compare the new placement rates and throughput rates to the rates from the old placement process to see if the statewide trends can be replicated at the college level. ”

—Placement Coordinator

results similar to the colleges with 80% or more transfer-level sections. More distinctly, three of the colleges (50%) reported **a desire to use localized placement rules but felt they did not have enough data to support the use of those rules**. Lastly, two of the colleges (33%) decided to use the default placement rules while gathering local data that could be compared to the default throughput rates.

**Three colleges who offered 65% or fewer transfer-level sections in fall 2019 reported using localized placement rules to place students into one-level below transfer-level for math and/or English.**

College personnel expressed a desire to keep pre-transfer courses for underprepared students. When asked about using local rules to place students into one-level below, an English instructor said, “We have a unique student population and serve a large number of non-traditional students.”

“Altering the default rules meant tracking outcomes and reporting more data. The math departments from the four colleges in the district were not confident that the district and the colleges would do what they needed to do to track that data.

—Dean of Liberal Arts

We are not offering enough pre-transfer English prep classes to serve the community. Neighboring colleges with a similar demographic are offering a greater proportion of pre-transfer courses. We’re not trying to hold students down; we just want students who need a prep course to have access to it.”

—English Department Chair

## Guided and Self-Placement

Half of the colleges discussed the process used to develop the guided or self-placement (GSP) tools at the institution. All seven of these colleges reported that **discipline faculty worked together to develop the GSP process and criteria**. At least three colleges worked with the institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) office to create the placement criteria. Two IR offices used Qualtrics<sup>9</sup> to build and host the campus’ GSP tools. Information Technology (IT) departments created the online GSP tool at three colleges. Two colleges are using a paper-based form until their IT departments have time to create an online replacement. **Most of the ESL departments require students to complete the GSP process in person with a counselor, assessment center staff member, or ESL faculty member**. Faculty expressed concerns about not being able to validate the self-reported GPA<sup>10</sup> data used to place students.

## Positive Outcomes of AB 705 Implementation

Colleges were asked about the most positive outcomes resulting from AB 705 implementation thus far. At the time that the interviews were conducted, colleges had one full semester of implementation (fall 2019) and were one to two months into the following spring term. The most positive outcomes of AB 705 cited by interviewees included improved academic outcomes, shifts in mindset around student capacity to succeed, changes to the placement

<sup>9</sup> Qualtrics is a web-based survey tool used to conduct survey research, evaluations, and other data collection activities.

<sup>10</sup> Research has found that “students are quite accurate in reporting their GPA” (Shawn & Matten, 2009, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED563469.pdf>) and that students’ self-reported GPA is highly correlated with students’ actual GPA (ACT, 2013, <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Info-Brief-2013-12.pdf>).

process, increased communication and collaboration across campus, curricular changes to shorten sequences and provide corequisite support, increased student support, and strengthened faculty engagement and support.

## Improved Academic Outcomes

At least one person from each college reported that the most positive outcome of AB 705 thus far is an **increase in students' access to transfer-level English and math courses and an improvement in their success and throughput rates.**

### ACCESS

All seven colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 said **access to transfer-level was one of the most positive outcomes of AB 705 thus far.** Five colleges who offered 80% or more of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 also felt **access to transfer-level coursework was one of the most positive outcomes** of AB 705 thus far.

Colleges reported that removing the basic skills sequences eliminated the biggest barrier to students' earning a degree and/or transferring.

**More students are attempting transfer-level courses earlier in their academic journeys under AB 705, particularly in math.** Disproportionately impacted populations that were historically stuck in the basic skills sequences now have access to transfer-level classes with support. At least three colleges saw an **increase in returning students who had attempted basic skills courses in the past and were coming back to complete transfer-level and finish their degrees.**

“The positive is that we are seeing incredibly bright and talented students who would have assessed into basic skills, now have access to transfer-level English. Opening access is really making students feel hopeful about being able to transfer sooner and attain their goals sooner. That really is the biggest positive. Most of the students in the college's basic skills classes are DSPS students, Black and Brown students, students who have already faced a life of struggles.”

—English Faculty

“Prior to AB 705, most students of color at the college did not have access to transfer-level. Now these students have access to transfer-level, even if that comes with other challenges due to the required support. This increase in students completing transfer-level in one year at the college will influence the statewide numbers. Our college is one of the biggest contributors of Hispanic student success in the state.”

—Research Analyst

Overall, most **math faculty felt that liberal arts and social science majors who need to complete statistics or liberal arts mathematics (SLAM) to fulfill the transfer-level math requirement benefited the most** from AB 705 and the removal of the basic skills sequence compared to business-science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (B-STEM) majors. Students with a B-STEM major have a sequence of math courses to complete to meet transfer requirements, and **many colleges are still offering intermediate algebra at one-level below transfer-level for B-STEM majors** who did not complete intermediate algebra (Algebra II) in high school.



## SUCCESS RATES

Twelve colleges indicated that **the most positive outcome of AB 705 thus far is the increase in the number of students who successfully completed transfer-level English and/or math in fall 2019.** Nine of the 12 colleges (75%) reported that success rates were maintained in fall 2019 compared to previous terms; including five colleges with required corequisite support who reported increases in transfer-level English and math success rates. Three colleges (25%) with optional support reported decreases in success rates. Overall, these 12 colleges felt the **increase in access to transfer-level English and math due to AB 705 led to a large increase in the raw number of students successfully completing transfer-level English and math, even if the success rates decreased slightly.**

“Success rates maintained in both math and English, especially for English. Faculty see that there was no harm done, even if students require extra support.”  
—Dean of Liberal Arts

Half of the colleges interviewed (five colleges who offered 80% or more and two colleges who offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019) reported that “students who do not like math are completing math,” especially statistics and liberal arts students. Most faculty from these colleges felt that the high level of success in statistics courses was good for students, allowing them to move on and focus on other classes. Three colleges reported that students who

completed statistics in fall 2019 came back in the spring saying they found a new interest in math and wanted to attempt a B-STEM course.

English faculty observed similar outcomes as math faculty, including an increase in the number of students completing transfer-level courses on their first attempt.

**English faculty also saw an increase in the number of students attempting the next transfer-level course in the English sequence.** Additionally, instructors who

teach general education courses outside of math and English reported that after completing transfer-level English, “students are better writers and better at conducting online research, and that translates into better grades.”

“Students see math differently after taking statistics. They see how math applies to their lives, and many report finding a new love for math. Intermediate algebra is too abstract and hard to relate to for many students.”  
—Student Equity Director

## THROUGHPUT RATES

Twelve colleges reported that the **increase in access to transfer-level courses due to AB 705 led to an increase in the number of students completing**

“Students are more likely to complete within two years under AB 705.”  
—Vice President of Instruction

“More students can transfer, instead of being career community college students. This helps us get back to being two-year colleges instead of six-year colleges.”  
—Counselor

**transfer-level classes on their first attempt and an increase in math and English throughput rates** (successful completion of a transfer-level course within one-year). This result is particularly true for students of color and students with disabilities. Colleges also noted a dramatic increase in math throughput rates after AB 705 implementation, particularly for SLAM students. One math instructor noted that “the throughput data speaks for itself.” An academic counselor said the increase in math and English throughput means “students get to move on with their education and careers.”

## Shifting Perceptions about Student Capacity to Succeed in Transfer-Level Courses

All of the colleges interviewed said that shifting perceptions about students’ capacity to succeed in transfer-level courses was both a positive outcome of AB 705 as well as a challenge (see the Challenges with Implementation section on page 22). Colleges talked about the culture before AB 705 and the use of deficit-based language, with common phrases like “not ready” and “can’t do it” often uttered when speaking both to students and about students. One faculty member said pre-AB 705 was dominated by the “sink or swim mentality.”

With AB 705, **colleges are telling students that they are “college-ready” and that their high school course experience means something. The mindset is shifting from, “Are the students college-ready?” to “Is the college student-ready?”** This shift in messaging meets students’ expectations about going to college to take college-level classes. Faculty also reported that **transfer-level courses challenge students in ways that basic skills classes did not.** The faculty interviewed described how seeing students succeed at transfer-level math and English shifted their perceptions about students’ capacity to succeed.

The interviewers observed a relationship between how interviewees viewed students’ capacity and their attitudes towards AB 705. **Faculty who reported a large shift in the culture on their campuses were more likely to share the positive effects of AB 705,** including reports that students are “rising to the occasion” and “capable of succeeding at transfer-level.” Whereas, **faculty who expressed concern or doubt related to students’ capacity to succeed in transfer-level courses were less likely to express positive views about AB 705.** Furthermore, colleges that reported a significant shift in perceptions around student capacity to succeed in transfer-level courses also reported an increase in students’ confidence and motivation upon completing transfer-level classes.

Counselors reported that students feel a great sense of accomplishment in their academic journeys, and “students’ perceptions about what is possible are shifting.” **Counselors said more students see transfer as a real possibility after completing transfer-level math and English.** Counselors and math faculty have also noticed an increase in the number of students who are interested in math and pursuing a STEM pathway after completing transfer-level math, including students who complete a statistics course.



Instructional and counseling faculty observed that creating this shift in mindset and culture on campus requires constant work and conversations, including professional development activities to reinforce the shift in language and perspective. One faculty member noted, “These are not changes that can be made by attending one conference, one workshop, one professional development activity, or [reading] one book. It is an ongoing, active effort.”

## Changes to the Placement Process

Twelve of the colleges interviewed said changes to the placement process were one of the most positive outcomes from AB 705 implementation thus far. Colleges reported that **redesigning the placement process for AB 705 led to a greater awareness of the student experience during the matriculation and registration process.** Colleges reported that the new placement process is “simpler” and “less confusing” for students, and that **students are completing the matriculation steps much more quickly** by not needing to take the assessment tests, saving two to three hours and an in-person appointment. Colleges reported an **increase in the number of students completing all matriculation steps and receiving placement results**, particularly at colleges with automated placement systems and a high proportion of students with high school data because they can provide students with immediate placement results, which **allows students to enroll more rapidly.**

“ AB 705 provided an opportunity for the college to create new placement policies, procedures, pathways, and support services with an equity lens. Members of the Student Equity Committee also served on the AB 705 Committee.

—Student Equity Director

Faculty and staff developed more awareness of the student experience that did not exist before. This includes a better understanding of the college’s registration system, how it works, and what the registration experience is like for students.

—Assessment Coordinator

“ Faculty made a conscious effort to make the process as smooth as possible for students. The impact and experience for the students was considered for each decision that was made during the AB 705 planning process.

—Research Analyst

We are working together to clean up our processes that impact students. We are thinking more about how students interact with the college.

—Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

Nine of the 12 colleges said students expressed relief about not needing to take the assessment tests, not needing to complete the basic skills sequences, and being able to start at transfer-level. According to the counselors and instructors at these colleges, students are excited about saving money, saving time, and having the opportunity to transfer sooner. Four of the nine colleges reported that students who only needed to complete transfer-level math are returning to finish their degrees. Counselors and instructors at these colleges are using the support course to boost students’ confidence in their ability to succeed in transfer-level courses.

## GUIDED AND SELF-PLACEMENT

Nine of the 14 colleges (64%) interviewed reported positive outcomes from their guided and self-placement process (GSP). Counselors, instructors, and assessment center staff reported that **students have more input and are more involved in the GSP process. One counselor noted that students who completed the GSP process feel empowered and are taking ownership of their starting placement level.** Colleges also reported that **fewer students are challenging their starting placement level**; however, colleges with required support said students are challenging the corequisite support requirement.

“Giving students more autonomy can often be empowering for students. The ESL department has seen that with guided self-placement efforts for ESL. Students feel empowered by having more choice and control over the classes they take.”  
—ESL Department Chair

Counselors involved in the GSP process said that the initial counseling sessions after implementing AB 705 are more “student-centered,” with richer discussions about students’ educational goals and pathways, especially for STEM students. Counselors additionally reported having more flexibility with how they counsel students. One counselor said AB 705 “liberated counselors from having to follow the test results,” and another said, “the assessment tests are no longer the be-

all-and-end-all.” **Counselors reportedly have more time to learn about students’ career interests and many times develop a comprehensive education plan during the first meeting.** Counselors said that “students see a clearer, more attainable pathway to transfer” after AB 705. Counselors are starting to see all students as potential transfer students. The counselors interviewed did not provide details about how students who do not intend to transfer are affected by AB 705.

## Increase in Communication and Collaboration across Campus

Ten colleges (seven offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math courses in fall 2019), mentioned an increase in interdisciplinary communication and collaboration across campus due to AB 705. These colleges reported that **AB 705 required “full campus involvement” and a “high level of collaboration across campus.”** This increased collaboration led to greater awareness of each person’s unique role and responsibilities on campus. According to one interviewee, “People from across disciplines and departments came together at the district level and at the college level” to make AB 705 happen. Faculty also reported an **increase in communication and collaboration amongst faculty within a discipline, between English and ESL departments, and between instructors and counselors.**

## Curricular Changes

Six colleges reported that **curricular changes made during AB 705 planning efforts were one of the most positive outcomes.** Faculty said the changes to the curriculum to shorten sequences and increase support for students aligned with previous efforts such as acceleration, skill integration, and contextualization.

ESL faculty and department chairs from five colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 reported on changes (or potential changes) to ESL curriculum to support ESL students in transfer-level English or an equivalent course. Two colleges created support courses for ESL students enrolled in transfer-level English. Three colleges expressed interest in offering a transfer-level English equivalent (TLEE) course for ESL students. One college started offering a TLEE course in fall 2019. Another college said its TLEE curriculum has been approved and it is waiting to get articulation agreements in place before offering the course. A third college surveyed students to gauge interest in a TLEE course and found that “ESL students are ready and excited to go into transfer-level English and mix with native [English] speakers.”

## Increase in Student Support

All 14 colleges reported an increased focus on student support services as well as an increase in students’ awareness of those services due to AB 705. **The development of the support courses, along with an increase in conversations about student support, was one of the most positive effects of AB 705.** Math, English, and ESL instructors reported spending more time talking with their peers about support models and what is or is not working compared to before AB 705. These discussions happened both informally and as part of formal conversations in department meetings. Instructors shared ideas and activities related to their student support efforts with other instructors. **Conversations about how to best support large groups of underprepared students in transfer-level math and English are reportedly happening at most of the colleges.**

“Counselors tell students who are wary about transfer-level that the course with support is basically the same as one-level-below, except upon successful completion it satisfies the transfer-level English or math requirement, and students earn transfer-level units.”  
—Counselor

Furthermore, faculty describe being “more vocal now with AB 705 about making sure students get the support they need, when they need it.” Faculty felt it was important for students to have access to wraparound services, just-in-time remediation, refresher workshops, summer bridge programs, embedded tutoring, and well-trained tutors. One college shared that faculty and embedded tutors are holding office hours in the Student Equity Center so that students can get help in a space that is familiar and comfortable. Several colleges mentioned the use of

“Faculty are actively working to identify struggling students sooner [and] to connect people to support resources.

—Student Equity Director

Students in the sections with support are showing up to office hours, engaging in the learning process, and appear to have better relationships with their instructors.”

—Math Faculty

an early alert system<sup>11</sup> or the desire to create one in order to help students who are struggling in transfer-level classes get the help they need before it is too late.

<sup>11</sup> Early alert is when campus personnel, usually instructional faculty, identify struggling students as early in the term as possible and connect the students with resources and support to increase the likelihood of success.

Four colleges that offered 80% or more and two colleges that offered 65% or fewer of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 reported using **a learning community support model with a credit corequisite support course linked to the main section.** With the learning community support model, one instructor teaches both the lecture and the support sections with one group of students. The support course is typically scheduled immediately before or after the lecture section in a nearby classroom. **The colleges using the learning community support model reported more positive outcomes compared to colleges with unlinked or noncredit support courses.** Two B-STEM instructors from different colleges said the “corequisite support course was the best thing to come out of AB 705.” Math and English faculty said the learning community support model created a collaborative and supportive community of learners. One Statistics instructor said, “Students spend a lot of time with each other and know the names of everyone in their class. There is a good sense of community.”

“The support course helps students deal with the anxiety of taking transfer-level courses right away, particularly with math. Students used to procrastinate when it came to taking math.”  
—Math Faculty

## Faculty Engagement and Support

**Faculty from all 14 colleges reported an increase in conversations about student success and outcomes.** Faculty reported the increase in conversations has led to a more supportive and collaborative environment, more “togetherness,” “strengthened faculty relationships,” and “improved teaching practices,” especially with the growing number of faculty members teaching the same course and content at a similar pace. **English and math faculty from all 14 colleges expressed a desire to better support students with diverse levels of preparedness in one classroom.** Many faculty members reported having common experiences with their peers and are working on finding solutions together.

“We are all in this together. We all need to care about lifting our students up.”  
—Math Faculty  
Things are more intentional. It is not about just dishing out the material. It is more about ... [asking], ‘Do your students understand the material? Are you making an impact? Are you helping them? Are your students successful?’  
—English Department Chair

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Colleges that provided faculty with professional development in preparation for AB 705 reported an **increase in faculty buy-in, particularly at colleges that offered a series of professional development activities, included part-time faculty in professional development opportunities, and provided part-time faculty with stipends to participate.** Many colleges noted the importance of including part-time faculty in professional development and department meetings. A large number of part-time faculty advise incoming students and teach entry-level

“There is an increase in dialogue around student success, teaching, and learning after implementing AB 705.”  
—English Faculty

math, English, and ESL courses, and most were not involved in the colleges' AB 705 planning and implementation efforts.

**Faculty also feel the quality of instruction has improved due to the professional development activities and increase in conversations about student success in transfer-level.** Some faculty reported learning about “blind spots” and “biases” in the classroom through these professional development activities. An English faculty member and Vice President of the Academic Senate said, “English and math faculty are having to become more student-focused and practice-oriented.”

“These changes [AB 705 implementation] really require a pedagogical shift in how we look at developmental education. If faculty do not understand why these changes are being made, it can be difficult to implement them effectively.

—ESL Department Chair

Faculty feel the extra time they get to spend with students during the support course allows them to get to know the students better and better understand their needs. Faculty feel strongly about the extra time with students. Faculty feel good about the experience.

—English Faculty

“Faculty are much more reflective about their teaching. Faculty engage in regular professional conversations around the work they are doing. Faculty are excited about these changes and enjoy having rich conversations about student success that are not related to SLOs [student learner outcomes] and other abstract ideas. We get to talk about concrete things that we do with students in a way that's really meaningful.

—English Faculty

It is easier to get people [part-time faculty] to make changes when they are part of the change.

—Vice President of Instruction

**Faculty also described actively working to identify gaps in students' skill sets and preparation, then providing students with the knowledge needed to succeed.** One English department chair said faculty at her college are starting with a few creative writing activities in transfer-level English, instead of jumping right into academic reading and writing. “These are low pressure, low-stakes writing assignments that allow instructors to assess where students are at and what they are struggling with.”

**Faculty who are teaching both the lecture and support sections feel they are more supportive and knowledgeable about their students and the challenges their students are facing inside and outside of the classroom** after implementing AB 705. Faculty teaching the lecture sections with a required credit corequisite support section reported an increase in student engagement and faculty's awareness of their students and their lives. These faculty reported spending more than six hours per week with the same 30 students. Faculty said there is an increase in conversations with and support to students outside of class and outside of office hours. They

“For English faculty, the movement [AB 705] honors the work they've been doing for a long time. They feel very united and good about what they are doing for students. They are now moving students even farther with their cohort program. There's a lot of excitement on their part.

—Dean of Liberal Arts

feel **the stronger their relationships are with their students, the more connected students will feel to the college campus.**

Lastly, six colleges who participated in the California Acceleration Project, ESL curriculum integration, or had BSSOT grants reported that the colleges' experience with initiatives aimed at shortening the basic skills sequences and increasing support for basic skills students led to a higher level of buy-in amongst faculty when implementing AB 705.

## Challenges with Implementation

Along with discussing the wide range of positive outcomes associated with AB 705 implementation, interviewees were also asked about the greatest challenges their institutions faced. As noted earlier, at the time the interviews were conducted, colleges had one full semester of implementation (fall 2019) and were one to two months into the following spring term.

The challenges identified during the interviews included the shifting mindsets around student capacity to succeed in transfer-level, AB 705 buy-in, supporting students in transfer-level English and math, guided and self-placement (GSP) process, enrollment difficulties, communication around AB 705, research and evaluation, professional development, and resource needs.

### Shifting Perceptions around Students' Capacity to Succeed in Transfer-Level

While numerous interviewees cited a changing mindset on campus as one of the positive outcomes of AB 705, this shift in perception was also identified as a challenge. **Fighting**

**the deficit mindset on campus and transitioning to a more capacity-based, growth mindset was reported as an ongoing difficulty** for 12 of the 14 institutions interviewed. Interviewees observed that "the presence of those who challenge AB 705" and those who feel "students aren't ready for transfer-level" is prevalent on campus "so students may experience that self-fulfilling prophecy." Moreover, instructors and counselors reported that this deficit mindset rubs off on students, leading them to question whether they can succeed in transfer-level courses.

“There’s pride on campus that we are strong implementers of AB 705 in English and math. There wasn’t a lot of pushback or negativity about these changes—there’s just some challenges [related to AB 705 implementation] that we are working to address.”

—AB 705 Coordinator

“I believe wholeheartedly in us being accountable for student outcomes. I believe in the intent of this law. However, I think that we need the [CCC] Chancellor’s Office to spend more time thinking about all the little things like distance education, tutoring, IT support—the entire mesh of work needed to implement AB 705. It is not as simple as just create a law, give us the information, and we implement it. We cannot implement it alone. We need a lot of support.”

—Math Department Chair



“Students who need basic skills cannot find the courses they need. Not everyone wants to transfer. If prospective students look online, many will not find what they are looking for. We are looking elitist.

—Counselor

Disabled students are being required to take six-unit math and English courses and nothing else in their first semester. Many are not able to pass either course, leaving students feeling like they are not college material.

—English Department Chair

Sometimes our solutions are a little too one-size-fits-all. There is no remediation. It is either take the support course or take transfer-level without support and get tutoring if you need help. I think that's a little too simplistic for the complexity of our population.

—Placement Coordinator

**Five colleges that offered 65% or fewer and two colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 stated that removing the remedial sequences is an equity issue, not a deficit mindset.** From their perspective, too many students are being rushed into transfer-level courses for which they are unprepared, setting them up for failure. Counselors and instructors described that AB 705 has reduced the range of options available for students, some of whom are not looking to transfer or want to move more slowly. **Some interviewees felt that disabled students in particular were negatively impacted** by the pressure to enroll directly in transfer-level courses.<sup>12</sup>

**Five colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 described AB 705 as too “one-size-fits-all” and expressed that colleges should have more freedom to do what is best for their community and population. All of these colleges offered one or more levels below**

**transfer-level in English and/or math.** Additionally, some counselors felt the limited pre-transfer sections were not offered at times that met the students' needs. Another counselor critiqued her college for only offering online sections of pre-transfer courses, “an instruction method that comes with challenges for underprepared students.”

One English department is considering having students who may not be ready for transfer-level English (even with support) enroll in a pre-transfer creative writing or a pre-transfer literature class. According to the department chair, these pre-transfer courses are already being offered and “can teach students valuable reading and writing skills in a fun, low-stakes, and low-pressure environment.” One challenge with this approach for students is that the courses do not count

“The students that AB 705 sought to serve are being hurt the most. There is an ethical issue, because the law gives the message that students are ready, but they are not ready, they are eligible. We are doing students a disservice.”

—English Faculty

<sup>12</sup> Early AB 705 research found that DSPS students are one to three times more likely to complete transfer-level English if they start at transfer-level than if they start one level below transfer, and DSPS students had throughput rates two times higher than non-DSPS students when placed into Statistics than when placed below any transfer-level math course. Source: [Comparative Throughput Analysis for AB 705 Compliance, Disaggregation by EOPS and DSPS Student Populations](#). Multiple Measure Assessment Project (MMA), October 2018. For more research and information about DSPS and AB 705 visit Interwork [Institute DSPS Solutions AB 705 Resources](#).

towards transfer. Another challenge is that this approach would require counselors to identify students who might be best served in pre-transfer courses. However, the department is not sure how this identification would work, but they think that English faculty would need to be part of the onboarding process to identify potential students who are not ready for transfer-level English with support.

## AB 705 “Buy-In”

Along with the challenge of shifting faculty’s perceptions about students’ capacity for success is the issue of generating sufficient “buy-in” for AB 705. **Most of the colleges interviewed described having “AB 705 skeptics.” Math faculty were the most common skeptics, but some English faculty, counseling faculty, administrators, and even AB 705 coordinators who were interviewed expressed a lack of buy-in on their parts.** Colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 indicated more resistance to AB 705 compared to colleges with 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019.

**The most common reason for not buying-into AB 705 was that interview participants were not convinced by the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) data.**

One faculty member stated the results did not apply to their college’s “unique student population.” In response to these objections, however, other interviewees suggested that these faculty members may not have spent sufficient time reviewing and understanding the MMAP data.

“One thing we don’t want from the state is another initiative. I was so proud of how we responded to the Common Assessment Initiative. We built a better placement model than what existed before. We were placing students into English 1A at a 70% rate, where the previous tool was placing students into 1A at a 30% rate. That felt like a giant leap forward. As soon as we got that running, here comes AB 705. It felt like the previous work was just temporary. It was for nothing. It felt like AB 705 oversimplified the situation. We just hope that someone does not just rearrange the rules on us again. What I’m complaining about is initiative fatigue.”

—English Department Chair

“Lack of faculty buy-in is a huge challenge. There are several faculty members in English and math who do not believe in AB 705 and want to keep the basic skills sequences in place. These faculty feel students need to complete the sequence of courses before enrolling in transfer-level. Negative attitudes from faculty in both math and English have been a big barrier to implementation. Recently there has been a positive shift in English faculty’s attitudes about AB 705.”

—Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

Faculty from five colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 **reported a desire to keep and teach pre-transfer courses.** One math department chair said teachers “like teaching basic skills,” and math and English faculty from four colleges said **teaching transfer-level courses increased their workload.** For example, English composition faculty said it takes more time to read students’ academic essays compared to the writing activities found in pre-transfer classes. **B-STEM and statistics faculty also reported an increase in workload due to the different levels of student preparedness that are now in one**



**section of a transfer-level class.** Additionally, three math chairs said math faculty have been teaching basic skills for so long that many are out of practice regarding how to teach transfer-level courses. Four math department chairs said **some math faculty's education and training did not cover teaching statistics**, just pre-algebra and algebra courses.

“Most faculty think we will go back to the old way when this initiative fizzles out in the next few years. There are questions about whether this effort is going to make an impact. Some of these instructors want to go back to the traditional sequence, and others do not understand [that] math has been the gatekeeper for so long that something needs to change.”

—Math Department Chair

**Faculty buy-in to AB 705 is also being affected by “initiative fatigue.”** Faculty and administrators from six colleges (five of which offered 80% or more of transfer level math and English sections in fall 2019) reported that **sweeping, statewide initiatives emerge every few years, requiring a massive effort on the part of the colleges, which is often followed by a course reversal or new initiative that replaces it.** As a result, some faculty and staff experience a level of fatigue that leaves them reluctant to invest in the latest initiative, especially if they are concerned that all of their work will be tossed out a few years down the line. In particular, colleges that

participated in the California Acceleration Project, Common Assessment Initiative,<sup>13</sup> and other initiatives felt they did not get enough time to gather data before “the state handed down another initiative, AB 705.” Some of the AB 705 skeptics feel like their acceleration work was for nothing, and that AB 705 is “acceleration on steroids.”

## Offering Support Services and Finding the Best Support Model

A director of student equity said, “A big challenge is getting students the wraparound services they need. Not all students who need support are getting the support needed to succeed.” One problem is that **colleges are limited in the number of support sections that can be offered, due to either space limitations, lack of faculty, or lack of resources to pay for the sections.** At least five colleges said they cannot offer enough sections with support to match the number of placement recommendations. In these cases, if the sections with support are unavailable, students are being allowed to enroll in the courses without support.

**Colleges are currently exploring a range of student support models, including transfer courses without corequisite support, optional or recommended corequisite support, required corequisite support, and additional units and time with support embedded into the lecture section.** The pros and cons of these various approaches are described below.

### TRANSFER-LEVEL COURSES WITHOUT COREQUISITE SUPPORT

Eight of the 14 colleges interviewed (five of which offered 80% or more, and three of which

“We are worried we don’t have enough safety nets for students who need more time and support.”

—Dean of Liberal Arts

<sup>13</sup> The Common Assessment Initiative aimed to create a common assessment test for math, English, and English as a Second Language for California Community Colleges.

offered 65% or less of transfer level math and English sections in fall 2019) expressed **concern about students in sections that do not offer corequisite support**. These students must seek out support services like tutoring on their own. Since many of these students do not show signs they are struggling until the middle of the term, a few colleges are considering late-start eight-week or 12-week support sections that are not linked to a specific lecture section. Math and English faculty from six colleges felt the **best way to support students enrolled in transfer-level math and English without corequisite support is through an early alert program**, where the instructor identifies students who are struggling in the course as early in the term as possible, and refers these students to support resources, such as tutoring and academic or personal counseling.

#### TRANSFER-LEVEL WITH OPTIONAL OR RECOMMENDED COREQUISITE SUPPORT

Four of the 14 colleges interviewed offer optional corequisite support and do not require certain populations to enroll in a corequisite support course. The optional corequisite support is available for all students; however, **the colleges with optional corequisite support reported that too many students who need support will opt out of taking the support course**.

“Both math and English faculty report that students who need support are not actively seeking the support they need.”

—Assessment Coordinator

#### TRANSFER-LEVEL WITH REQUIRED COREQUISITE SUPPORT

At least seven of the 14 colleges interviewed said certain populations of students are required to enroll in the transfer-level course and an additional corequisite support course. Some colleges linked the two section numbers in the student registration system to ensure students in a specific transfer-level section also enroll in a specific corequisite support section. **The five colleges that linked the transfer-level course with a credit corequisite support course reported better attendance and success outcomes compared to interviewees from colleges using other support models; however, college personnel also expressed concerns about the use of this “all or nothing” model.**

**Counselors from colleges with required support felt that it is important for students to understand during the enrollment process that dropping the required support course means the lecture section will be automatically dropped as well.** Most students end up losing five or six units when they drop the transfer-level English or math course and the linked credit corequisite support course, which can have major implications with respect to their financial aid. Faculty discussed unlinking the sections, but do not want to lose the learning community support model with the same students enrolled together in both sections.

Three colleges with required noncredit corequisite support struggled with student attendance issues. Similar to colleges with optional corequisite support, **colleges with required noncredit support reported that too many students who need support feel noncredit means “optional” and do not attend the support course on a regular basis.** One English department created a noncredit certificate of competency for students who complete all three levels of the noncredit support course, which is used to incentivize attendance. It is too early to know

if the certificate had a significant impact on attendance; however, English faculty felt the anecdotal evidence from fall 2019 was “promising.”

## TRANSFER-LEVEL PLUS ADDITIONAL UNITS AND TIME

Five of the fourteen colleges offer transfer-level English or math courses that include additional units and time to support students who were required to take a support course. The colleges reported that attendance was not an issue with this model; however, faculty are concerned about students losing up to six units if the course is dropped.

## TUTORING

Ten of the 14 colleges interviewed reported that **finding, training, and scheduling tutors is challenging**. More students than ever are enrolling in math and English in their first term. There is an increase in demand for tutors in the Tutoring Center and for embedded tutoring<sup>14</sup> in the classroom. Too often, **the number of faculty requests for tutors outnumbers the number of available tutors**.

Five colleges said they used embedded tutors prior to AB 705 in their English classes; however, the volume of tutors needed with AB 705 made it difficult for the departments to manage the program. One English department chair expressed a desire for the Chancellor’s Office to create a tutor training program that can be completed online or that colleges can use to train tutors in-person. Four colleges reported that embedded tutoring is new for their math faculty. Math faculty at these colleges said they were **unsure of how to best utilize the embedded tutors**.

## EVALUATING SUPPORT MODELS

**Faculty want to know what the most effective models are for supporting students, particularly in transfer-level.** Math, English, and ESL faculty reported anecdotal information about the effectiveness of different models, but most colleges are waiting on their institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) offices to examine student success data, especially for students enrolled in sections with and without support in fall 2019.

“More students than ever are seeking tutoring, support courses want embedded tutors, and it is difficult enough to find students who are eligible and willing to be tutors.

—English Department Chair

Math faculty struggle to find tutors for the embedded tutoring portion of the new support courses. The level of coordination needed to implement an embedded tutoring program is new for math. English has been doing it for years. Finding tutors for early morning classes and for instructors using older textbooks is especially challenging.

—Math Department Chair

Sometimes it feels a little isolated that we are all trying to solve [creating an effective support model] separately. Statewide, we have a lot of great colleagues doing amazing things. And we don’t always know about them. ”

—Assessment Coordinator

<sup>14</sup> Embedded tutoring is a support model where a peer tutor works in the classroom under the instructor’s direction to help students understand concepts and increase student engagement.

## GUIDED AND SELF-PLACEMENT

**Colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 reported greater challenges placing students compared to colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019.** These colleges struggled with students not reading the instructions and course information when self-placing. Counselors at these colleges reported that many students are completing the **GSP tool online, but are not reading the information about AB 705 and the descriptions of their recommended courses.** Additionally, the students are coming for drop-in counseling sessions, which tend to have shorter appointments, and counselors feel “rushed” and “pressured” to inform students about their rights under AB 705 and gather enough information about students to guide them towards the best math and English courses.

**Math faculty from colleges who reported challenges with GSP further reported an increase in the number of students enrolled in the wrong math class in fall 2019.** Faculty found that students picked from the list of available math classes based on the course unit load or schedule and not on their academic major and the requirements the course fulfills. Faculty noted that these incorrect enrollments were most common in liberal arts math courses and intermediate algebra, concluding that the students should have enrolled in statistics.

According to ESL faculty and department chairs who were interviewed, **identifying students who could benefit from ESL instruction and support was a challenge.** Most colleges used data from CCC Apply or an online GSP tool and provided all students with an English placement recommendation. Students interested in ESL courses had to opt to complete the ESL GSP process, which usually required a one-hour in-person appointment with a counselor, assessment office staff member, or ESL faculty member. Students with an English placement and an ESL placement had the option to enroll in either the recommended ESL course or the recommended English course. Three colleges reported that students who completed the ESL placement process and chose to enroll in transfer-level English were eligible to enroll in a support course designed specifically for ESL students.

## Enrollment Difficulties

Twelve colleges reported a range of enrollment challenges. The most common enrollment challenges with implementing AB 705 are described below.

### UNCLEAR LABELING IN CLASS SCHEDULE

Six of the 12 colleges noted that **transfer-level sections with linked corequisite support were not easy to identify in the schedule of classes.** It was reported that counselors and students struggled to find the sections that went together, including the overall time commitment for the two sections, combined unit load, and schedule. Three colleges made improvements to their fall 2020 schedule of classes by listing corequisite sections near the corresponding lecture section.

### STUDENTS STRUGGLING TO ENROLL IN THE RIGHT COURSES

All 12 colleges who reported enrollment challenges said **too many students do not know which math course to choose and whether they should enroll in corequisite support.** As one interviewee described, “The math pathways are confusing for students, and even more so with the support

options.” Ten of the colleges interviewed are **giving students at least two math placements, one for B-STEM and one for SLAM. Counselors at these colleges said some students thought they needed to take both courses, and other students picked a course without understanding the difference between SLAM and B-STEM.** Students with undecided majors were most likely to not know which course to take, and counselors said they struggled to advise these students.

## STUDENTS CHOOSING NOT TO ENROLL IN SUPPORT COURSES

Five of the 12 colleges reported that **too many students who needed support to succeed in transfer-level classes opted out of taking the support course.** One math department chair said, “Given the choice, most students will take the course without support.” English and math departments with optional or recommended support said that many students who needed the support did not enroll in the support course. Moreover, **English and math departments with required corequisite support and linked support sections reported that many students who needed the support challenged out of the support course during the enrollment process.**

## DIFFICULTY FITTING LECTURE AND SUPPORT SECTIONS INTO STUDENT SCHEDULES

Counselors from four colleges observed that **students struggled to find time in their schedules for both the transfer-level lecture section and the support section.** One counselor noted that “both sections together required a large chunk of time.” Another counselor said students who enrolled in the lecture section and a linked support section during peak hours had trouble enrolling in courses in smaller departments with limited offerings. A third counselor reported that students who can only take courses in the evening had a hard time fitting the lecture and support sections into their limited schedules. Three counselor’s expressed a desire to move towards block scheduling<sup>15</sup> to meet the students’ needs, rather than scheduling to meet the faculty’s needs.

## Communication Around AB 705

According to interviewees, the implementation of AB 705 has led to challenges around the dissemination of accurate and consistent information on placement policies, procedures, and placement options. The issues related to these challenges are described below.

“Our goal is for students to receive similar information about their placement options regardless of the counselor they meet with.”  
—Counselor

“Getting 60+ part-time faculty up to speed with these changes and to develop a common understanding of why the college made these changes is a big challenge.”  
—English Department Chair

## DISSEMINATION OF ACCURATE AND CONSISTENT MESSAGING

Eight colleges reported that **one of the biggest difficulties was making sure everyone involved in the onboarding process was provided with accurate and consistent information.** This included counselors, instructors, and staff in the Assessment Center and the Welcome Center. It

<sup>15</sup> Scheduling that is organized in a structured and predictable manner with courses that often meet in consolidated “blocks” of time, such from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

“ AB 705 is as much a shift in thinking for students as it is for the college and faculty. Students and their parents think tests are needed to be placed into the correct class, usually because a family member or friend did it that way in the past. Once students and parents understand the new placement process and purpose, most are okay with it. Students love the change when they understand it. ”

—Assessment Coordinator

was reported that keeping part-time counselors and instructors up to date with changes has been an ongoing challenge.

## MOVING FROM ASSESSMENT TO PLACEMENT

Several assessment coordinators reported that it has been challenging to inform prospective students, their parents, feeder high schools, and the surrounding community about changes to the placement process and students' right to enroll in transfer-level math and English under AB 705.

Assessment coordinators said **prospective students and their families are still regularly showing up at the Assessment Center to take a test to enroll in math or English at the college.** One coordinator said, “the presence of an Assessment Office adds to the confusion.” Most coordinators mentioned a potential name change for the Assessment Office to the Placement Office, Orientation Center, or Onboarding Center. One counselor who works in the Assessment Office said, “This is a big shift in thinking.”

## AB 705 Research and Evaluation

Eight of the 14 colleges interviewed expressed their **excitement and curiosity about examining their throughput data** to see how the colleges' local results compare to the statewide outcomes presented in the default placement rules. Six of the colleges reported that **timely access to data is a challenge.** Faculty want to know what is and is not working, but they also want a full year's worth of data. By the time faculty have access to data from the first year of AB 705 implementation (fall 2019 and spring 2020), it will be mid-summer at the earliest. Faculty expressed concern that timing could be too late to make modifications for the upcoming fall term. In addition, faculty and administrators are concerned about confounding data due to the overlap of multiple initiatives and grants on campus all targeting underprepared students in math and English.

“ Faculty want to know where acceleration left us and where AB 705 is going to lead us. It is difficult to say whether throughput rates will increase because of AB 705 or because of the shorter sequences and levels that were eliminated under acceleration. If both acceleration and AB 705 are grapes, what we've gotten so far is closer to grape juice than to wine. ”

—Vice President of Instruction

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Math and English faculty from 12 of the 14 colleges (86%) interviewed reported that **faculty need professional development to implement AB 705 fully and effectively.** Six of these 12 colleges stressed that part-time faculty from math, English, ESL, and counseling **must be included in all**



**professional development opportunities**, as part-time faculty teach a large proportion of entry-level math and English courses and advise a large number of incoming students.

## TEACHING SOFT SKILLS

Math and English faculty from 10 colleges (71%) reported that **faculty have struggled to teach soft skills and incorporate these skills into the regular course content**. According to the faculty interviewed at these colleges, the increase in the number of students starting at transfer-level has increased the need for faculty to help students develop their college-readiness skills to be successful, including note taking, study skills, time management, and life skills. These faculty noted that soft skills are usually taught by counseling faculty, and that a large proportion of math and English **faculty need to learn how to help students develop their soft skills in order to better serve all levels of students starting at transfer-level**.

## TEACHING MULTIPLE LEVELS IN ONE CLASS

English and math faculty from 11 colleges (79%) expressed a need for **professional development to learn how to best support and teach students with multiple levels of preparedness and content knowledge in one class**. Faculty described how they feel unprepared to teach students coming into their classes, particularly B-STEM faculty. Math and English faculty interviewed said they want to learn how to better assess students' gaps in knowledge at the start of the term and provide quality teaching to fill in those gaps, while continuing to teach at a pace that allows the instructor to cover all of the content needed to uphold the articulation agreements for the course.

## TEACHING TRANSFER-LEVEL COURSES

Five colleges that offered 65% or fewer of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 said most of their instructors are comfortable teaching basic skills courses, but **many do not have recent experience teaching transfer-level courses**,

“Some instructors struggle with incorporating study skills into classroom activities. Part-time faculty feel the math department is adding extra work by asking them to integrate study skills into their activities and assignments.

—Math Department Chair

Faculty are content experts, but many lack expertise in teaching pedagogy. ”

—Math Department Chair

“The faculty need to develop their skills to teach the new population of students enrolled in transfer-level classes.

—English Department Chair

The biggest challenge for faculty is readjusting the presentation of materials to students that are not coming in with the same level of preparation that the faculty are used to seeing in these transfer level courses. ”

—Math Department Chair

“A lot of the math faculty have never taught statistics before, and a good chunk refuse to teach it. The large increase in statistics sections has been challenging. Some faculty do not know how to teach stats and are working on teaching themselves to pick up more sections. A SLAM faculty member is developing professional development tools and new curriculum and activities for faculty to use and share for statistics classes. ”

—Math Department Chair

**particularly statistics and English composition.** Math and English department chairs reported having faculty who lack transfer-level teaching experience need support to build their capacity to teach these courses. Colleges felt that **providing support to build instructors' capacity to teach transfer-level courses will increase faculty buy-in and improve faculty's overall attitudes about AB 705** and students' capacity to succeed at transfer-level, as well as increase the number of transfer-level sections the department can offer.

## Resource Needs

Ten of the 14 colleges (71%) interviewed reported that a high-level of support is required for AB 705 to be successful. The key areas in which colleges expressed a need for additional support include tutoring, professional development, faculty stipends, information technology, and institutional research, planning, and effectiveness.

### TUTORING

Math and English faculty from 10 of the 14 colleges (71%) interviewed reported an **increase in the number of students needing support at one time.** Eight of the 10 colleges said they **do not have the resources to provide students with the level of support needed to succeed.** These colleges reported that the number of students required and recommended to enroll in a support course exceeds the number of support sections so students are being allowed to enroll in transfer-level without support. Department chairs from math and English reported a significant increase in the number of faculty requests for embedded tutors for transfer-level courses in fall 2019.

“Support services are expensive, and they are the key to success rates—they need to be supported. Programs shouldn't have to fight for funding constantly when we all know funding support services such as tutoring are critical to high success rates.”

—English Department Chair

**Faculty said it is challenging and time consuming to find students who are available to attend the course as an embedded tutor, to train the students to be effective embedded tutors, and to secure funds to compensate the tutors.** These colleges reported that funding for embedded tutoring is currently being allocated on a term-by-term basis from the Tutoring Center budget, student equity funds, or short-term funding sources like existing grants. Math and English faculty from seven colleges reported that the number of faculty requests for tutors exceeds the funding and many requests cannot be fulfilled.

“Funding is the biggest issue. Funding is needed for tutors in the Tutoring Center, faculty stipends for curriculum development, professional development for faculty, and embedded tutors for support courses.”

—ESL Department Chair

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Colleges shared that they need funding to provide professional development for full-time and part-time faculty and staff. Nine colleges reported that **budget constraints have made it difficult to meet their faculty and staff's professional development needs.**



“Budget is the biggest restraint to not being able to give students everything they need to be successful. Budget limits the number of sections with support the department can offer. Many students who need support are not able to enroll in a section with support.”  
—Counselor

## FACULTY STIPENDS

Five of the 10 colleges said AB 705 asks a lot of faculty and **funds are needed to pay for curriculum development to shorten course sequences, create corequisite support courses, convert in-person support courses into online courses, conduct support workshops, and participate in professional development activities.** These colleges expressed a need for designated funds to compensate part-time faculty to participate in professional development opportunities.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Four of the 10 colleges reported that their **information technology (IT) departments are understaffed and the lack of IT staff made it difficult to fully implement AB 705.** These colleges said IT played a key role in each step of the AB 705 implementation process including creating and modifying applications and intake forms to gather additional data for placement purposes, building new placement systems, integrating high school performance data (many times from multiple sources), communicating placement information to students in a timely manner, linking corequisite support sections to transfer-level sections, and supporting an increase in online transfer-level and support sections. Two of the colleges reported that their Guided and Self-Placement form is still paper-based and must be completed in-person in the Assessment Center until the colleges' IT department has time to create an electronic version.

## RESEARCH SUPPORT

Six of the 10 colleges reported that timely access to data is a challenge due to under-resourced institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) offices. These colleges stated that it is difficult to know what is working or not working, particularly when piloting different support models, without having timely access to data to improve AB 705 policies and practices. It was reported that most research staff are working on grants and other reporting obligations, leaving little time to evaluate the effectiveness of AB 705.

## Students' Capacity to Succeed

AB 705 sparked intense discussion around student preparedness and the ability to meet rigorous course requirements in transfer-level math and English within the first year of college. **By and large, colleges believe that students are capable of successfully completing transfer-level math and English in their first year, as long as they have the necessary support.** All colleges emphasized the importance of college

“We need to create a positive environment for students. We need them to believe they can do it. Not being good at something is not permanent, it is just temporary. They will get better. We need to promote a growth mindset. For the students and the faculty. We need to put an emphasis on this and change the culture.”

—Dean of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

readiness in the form of concurrent support services, corequisites, and institutional infrastructure in ensuring students have the support necessary to be successful.

Colleges were asked to share their overall belief in students' capacity to succeed in transfer-level math and English. The major themes that emerged from the interviews included messaging to students, early throughput findings, concurrent support and wraparound services, supporting students inside and outside of the classroom, and the elimination of remedial courses.

“A big battle for students coming into transfer level who might not feel prepared is confidence. As an instructor, I can play a big role in that student's academic trajectory. We can work with these students and get them where they need to be.”

—English Department Chair

## Messaging to Students

Six of the 14 colleges (43%) interviewed reported that **the message students now receive is that they are college-ready**. Instructional and counseling faculty noted that students who entered college prior to AB 705 often believed they were not prepared for college-level courses, and this belief was reinforced through the results of assessment testing and subsequent conversations related to placement. Students received the message that they were not ready for the rigor of college-level classes and would need to take remedial coursework before they were eligible to enroll in transfer-level courses. These colleges reported that now the conversation has changed. **Students hear that they can enter transfer-level courses right away, and those who feel underprepared or uncertain in their abilities are reassured they are capable of successful completion and will receive the support they need from the college**. Interviewees from these colleges reported that conversations with students about transfer-level math and English have become more positive and encouraging, which has resulted in greater motivation and enthusiasm from students. One counselor explained students are told “high school has prepared you for this,” which is the opposite message students received when they were placed into remedial courses in the past.

“When students know the stakes are higher, it really motivates them to get to the next level.”

—English Department Chair

“We know what's in our support courses, what's being offered and what type of support they're getting, so when we meet with students, we are able to communicate that to them. They know exactly what is going to be taught and what type of support is going to be given to them to be successful.”

—Counselor

## THE ROLE OF COUNSELING

As an early and ongoing point-of-contact for students, many **counselors described how their role positively impacts students' mindsets and bolsters students' self-confidence in taking transfer-level math and English**. Counselors from five colleges reported that their communication with students has taken a more encouraging tone, resulting in a shift in students' attitudes about their own personal capacity to succeed in transfer-level English and math. As one counseling supervisor explained, “The more counselors tell students

“I pretty much cover it all, being more detailed and thorough, so the student understands why they’re not having any more remedial courses. And explaining the law so they understand what is going on and why it’s happening. And then definitely giving them the resources that are available to them on campus.”

—Counselor

they are ready for transfer-level, the more confident students become in their ability to succeed in transfer-level.”

Some interviewees believed that students “would flood the transfer-level courses,” but the majority of counselors reported that they spend significantly more time explaining to students what each math and English course entails, as well as the role of support courses and corequisites to ensure students are enrolling in the appropriate course based on their abilities. According to one counselor, this

information is also shared with high school partners to ensure they are aware of the changes taking place with math and English at the college and can communicate that to their students.

## Early Throughput Findings

All 14 colleges reported that overall, **more students are enrolling in transfer-level courses and preliminary data suggest an increase in the number of students successfully completing math and English in their first year.** Twelve of the 14 colleges (86%) interviewed reported a positive increase in successful course completions following AB 705 implementation. All seven colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 and five of the seven colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 said they are **seeing promising student outcomes following implementation of AB 705.**

“Our throughput is 52% now and it used to be in the 13% to 17% range for transfer-level math and English.”

—Dean of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

While many math and English faculty said they were more supportive of students’ ability to succeed in transfer-level courses once they had data to validate the new placement approach, **some still indicated the data do not guarantee learning is taking place.** According to faculty at three colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019, throughput will be higher based on the volume of students enrolling in transfer-level courses, but that does not necessarily mean students are learning what they need to be successful in subsequent courses or following transfer to a four-year university.

## Supporting Students Inside and Outside the Classroom

Five of the 14 colleges (36%) shared how they intend to **take a closer look at students who do not pass transfer-level math and English the first time.** These colleges expressed the need to understand which students are not passing and the factors that impact their success. They are working to **understand who these students are to determine next steps and modifications moving forward.**

“For English, it’s a 65% success rate and that’s a great number, but I know that one of the conversations currently happening is what about the rest? The 35%? Why are they not succeeding?”

—Counselor

These five colleges said they were examining various influences and barriers that contributed to an unsuccessful student outcome. Faculty reported that while some students struggle with the pace of the course, or lack study skills or note taking skills, there are often factors that go beyond the course content or rigor of the material. One math chair explained that “depending on who signs up for courses, 25 to 30% may not pass” and it is often unrelated to academic reasons. Colleges cited work obligations, family responsibilities, and health concerns as competing priorities that can pose a threat to student success. According to many counseling and instructional faculty, **there is no guarantee throughput will increase if non-academic factors are not also considered and addressed.**

“There are different factors being looked at. The professors are looking at why they think the student didn’t pass their class and then also having a conversation with the student in terms of what happened. Was it the content, was it the style of teaching, or was it personal factors that kept them from putting the energy and time into the class?”

—Counselor

There are some concerns about what colleges can do, and how to keep these students moving forward on their path. A few colleges said **the reality is that some students will need to take a class twice, and noted that while many students perform better the second time, more work needs to be done to support these students inside and outside the classroom.**

## Elimination of Remedial Courses

Some faculty at colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 shared their **fear that AB 705 may harm students who truly need basic skills courses.** These individuals expressed concern that eliminating remedial courses prevents the

“We’re not trying to hold students down; we just want students who need a prep course to have access to it. No one is going to come into the lowest level English class and see those students and say they could succeed in transfer-level English with support. It’s not going to happen.”

—English Department Chair

We don’t want students to eke by in (English) 1A then get blown out of the water when they take their first transfer course with a 1A prerequisite.”

—English Faculty

college from being able to accommodate different skill levels for students who are not ready for transfer-level English or math. Math faculty in particular worry that STEM students who tend to “have a longer path” and “sometimes benefit from taking a lower level” may be negatively impacted later in their academic career if they rush through the foundational knowledge needed to be successful in more advanced math and science courses. Five of the 14 colleges (36%) reported that while they are **still offering pre-transfer-level math and English, the availability of these courses has been limited, thus creating a new challenge for students who would prefer to take the lower level.** They continue to offer remedial courses, but the number of sections offered is small compared to the number of transfer-level sections, so students who choose to take the lower level may find themselves on the waitlist or delaying their enrollment to a later term.

Colleges that continue to offer pre-transfer-level courses reported concerns about how the elimination of these courses will impact students in the long term. According to instructional faculty at these colleges, they want all students to be successful, but passing a student who is not ready for the next level will not help the student and the bar cannot be lowered to accommodate less-prepared students. **Some faculty said they are worried they may be setting their students up for failure. Students who enter transfer-level courses underprepared may drop or fail, which gives them the impression they are not ready for college.** For those students who do manage to pass, they may find themselves struggling in subsequent courses due to a lack of adequate preparation.

Underprepared students are particularly concerning for B-STEM instructors, who teach in areas where each course truly builds on the previous one. Unlike statistics, which for many students is their last required math course, B-STEM students are at the beginning of their mathematical careers. Students who are completing the SLAM sequence will likely pass and throughput will reflect that, but B-STEM students taking transfer-level math may struggle. Math faculty are **concerned that AB 705 may be rushing B-STEM majors through their path, which could have negative consequences later in their education.**

“We have to make sure students have a very firm foundation before they continue on into calculus and beyond.”  
—Math Department Chair

Math faculty are also concerned that B-STEM students will pick the SLAM course placement instead of B-STEM in order to begin at transfer-level course work and avoid taking intermediate algebra. This approach could increase inequities already extant in STEM if students feel dissuaded from pursuing the STEM pathway.

## How Colleges Support Students

Colleges reported a variety of services, tools, and resources that have been implemented to support students in transfer-level math and English. Twelve of the 14 colleges (86%) said they utilize **corequisite courses either for pre-transfer-level courses, transfer-level courses, or both.** Seven of these 12 colleges (58%) reported offering **hands-on tutoring services through an academic success center or math and writing center,** and four colleges (33%) shared that they support students through **embedded coaches and tutors** who are available both inside and outside the classroom. Other types of support reported by colleges included **early alert systems, summer bridge programs, peer mentors, and using a standardized curriculum.** Two colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 said they are going beyond the implementation of support and have begun evaluating which resources are most helpful to students. The support services that were identified as most effective by colleges are outlined below.

“We have to keep raising the bar for students and letting them meet the challenge. They need it. We need to provide them with affirmations that they can do it. If they don’t believe they can, we need to give them the supportive services that will help them achieve those benchmarks.”  
—Student Equity Director

## Comprehensive Support

All 14 colleges reported that students are accessing and using the support services available on campus more than ever. The 12 colleges offering **corequisite support courses reported that these classes are generally credit classes, usually one to two units.** Three colleges noted that they also offer non-credit co-requisite support. In many cases, colleges said the same instructor teaches both the core and corequisite class to ensure consistency in teaching style and course content. According to one counselor, the corequisite support acts like a “built in tutoring session,” and students appreciate that the instructor knows the course concepts and the areas in which students are struggling. Instructional faculty said this model **operates similar to a learning community**, reporting that it **creates a supportive and collaborative environment for students.** It is less intimidating for students to seek help from the instructor they know compared to a tutor in a lab or learning center they do not know. Four colleges said the corequisite support courses they offer help students feel more confident and comfortable taking transfer-level math or English, particularly for adult learners and returning students who may be entering college after having been away from a math or English course for a number of years. One college also noted the corequisite support course can serve as a connection point between the main course and additional support services available on campus such as the tutoring center and other learning labs.

Three out of 14 colleges (21%) cited the benefit of **summer bridge programs**,<sup>16</sup> which allow students to access support before they officially start college. One college shared how in some instances students end up not needing the support class during the fall because of participation in the bridge program. Three of the seven colleges that offered 80% or more transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 reported using **early alert systems such as Starfish as a means to support students**, and one college that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 is developing an early alert system to help identify students who may be struggling. Additionally, three of the 14 colleges (21%) said they **redesigned their math, English, or ESL curriculum** (e.g., combining beginning/intermediate algebra) **or standardized it such that every section within a particular course uses the same materials** (e.g., textbook, assignments, handouts) in an effort to create a consistent foundation. These faculty expressed the benefit of knowing that students enter the next course in the sequence with a standard knowledge base.

## Corequisite Scheduling and Course Design

According to nine of the 14 colleges (64%), **implementing corequisites was difficult due to barriers in institutional infrastructure** and the numerous moving parts involved. Five of the 14 colleges (36%) noted that the transfer-level and corequisite courses are linked, which means students must enroll in both sections at the same time, which **requires coordination terms of scheduling, technology, and communication to students.**

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<sup>16</sup> Summer bridge programs are designed to ease the transition to college. Most programs target a specific population like first-time college students transitioning from high school to college, or adult learners transitioning from an adult school or employment into college. The goal of these programs is to help students develop the skills needed to be successful in college prior to starting their first term.



Three of the 14 colleges (21%) remarked that the timeframe to get everything implemented for AB 705 was very fast, and the lack of funding to support the effort posed challenges in terms of resources.

Four of the 14 colleges (29%) reported **greater success in their AB 705 implementation efforts after streamlining the registration process for students**. According to these institutions, courses are designed such that students who enroll in either the lecture or support section are automatically enrolled in the corresponding section (i.e., linked registration). When students drop the lecture or support course, the corresponding linked course is automatically dropped as well.

“It’s very confusing right now. Students have to open a section of [English] 1A and then they will either see a note that says it’s linked with a coreq[uisite] or not. And if it’s linked then they have a section number that they can look up, they can’t even click on that. They have to go back and search for a new class. I’m sure it’s preventing a lot of students from enrolling or causing them extra time.”

—English Department Chair

Additionally, math and English faculty from these same four colleges found that the **support courses were more effective when scheduled immediately before or after the main lecture section, and in the same classroom**, which makes it feel like one continuous course for both students and instructors. Instructors are seeing an **increase in retention if the support course is treated as an extension of the lecture and classroom activities**, not just a time for answering questions about homework or discussing study skills. This model may not be conducive for all courses, as one college offering a four-unit statistics course with a two-unit support course noted. The class time required to conduct a six-unit course in one session without breaks may be challenging for students depending on how many days the course meets each week. This college reported that if they schedule classes more frequently during the week, “students aren’t attracted to the class,” making it difficult to identify the optimal design and format for each course.

## Addressing Equity Gaps in Enrollment and Throughput

Equity is one of the most important issues facing community colleges today, and many are already examining the impact of AB 705 through an equity lens. Colleges want to ensure that AB 705 helps increase equity among all student populations. **All 14 colleges reported they are working to improve equity in student outcomes by identifying gaps and increasing support and intervention**. The key equity areas colleges cited during the interviews included access to transfer-level courses, preliminary data findings, and institutional roadblocks.

### Access to Transfer-Level Courses

All 14 colleges reported that overall access has improved with more students now eligible to enroll directly into transfer-level math and English. In particular, they have seen an **increase in access among students who otherwise would have been placed in developmental courses**. As one college noted, providing every student with the opportunity to take transfer-level courses has helped end the “pipeline of doom” for those who historically would have had to complete a long sequence of math and English courses before reaching transfer-level.



Eleven of the 14 colleges (79%) said they are seeing an increase in the number of students placing and enrolling in transfer-level math and English, but it is too early to tell whether these enrollments will translate to an improvement in student equity gaps.

## Preliminary Data Findings

All colleges reported that they are **gathering information to inform their equity work and provide insight into equity-related challenges**. Eight out of 14 colleges (57%) said they are currently in the process of **evaluating data to assess the impact of AB 705 on student outcome metrics and determine how equity gaps have been affected**, an effort predominantly led by institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) offices. The student groups most often mentioned by interviewees as experiencing disproportionate impact at their colleges are Hispanic or Latina/o/x, African-American/Black, and first-generation students, along with students with disabilities.

Six of the 14 colleges (43%) have observed positive impacts based on data provided thus far by their IR offices, but the findings are still preliminary, and many colleges report that they **do not have enough data yet to evaluate equity gaps fully**. Five colleges reported that early findings look promising and their equity gaps have narrowed to some degree. These colleges noted that **many disproportionately impacted groups have seen an increase in terms of both the number and percentage of successful completions; however, the fundamental equity gaps persist**.

Three of the 14 colleges (21%) reported **increased success rates or throughput rates collegewide, but noted that equity gaps have not changed**; the students who were disproportionately impacted before the change in placement policies, remain disproportionately impacted.

One college reported a **decrease in success rates overall, but improved course success rates for some of their historically underperforming student groups**. Colleges that serve smaller student populations noted that while they are working to identify student groups that are disproportionately impacted by the new placement rules, the number of students in certain groups can be very low, making it difficult to make comparisons and draw conclusions.

Furthermore, colleges have begun looking at which courses have the lowest success rates, rather than which student populations. Three of the 14 colleges reported they are **comparing outcomes in courses with support to those without support**. The focus is less on the students who are underperforming and more on the classes themselves.

“What we would see is rising success rates for all students, everyone was improving, and the percentage point gaps [equity gaps] were very often still there. We’ve had some narrowing, but not as much as we would have hoped.”

—Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

“There is going to be a practice of revisiting all the plans, all the logistics, the thought processes, and all the tools we put in place prior to this fall [2019]. The plan is to regroup and hopefully improve some of the practices to make it easier for our students. We want to set some targets for how our students should be doing in these classes.”

—Research Analyst

Two of the 14 colleges (14%) shared how they are examining both quantitative data (e.g., success rates, throughput, units completed) as well as qualitative data (e.g., student feedback from surveys and focus groups) in their analyses of the impact of AB 705 on equity. These two colleges noted the **importance of hearing directly from students and faculty to determine what is working well and what can be improved**. As data from the first year of implementation is processed, colleges reported they will work to identify trends, capitalize on successes, and eliminate challenges.

## Institutional Roadblocks

Lastly, four of the 14 colleges (29%) shared how they are also **looking at institutional roadblocks that may be disproportionately impacting certain students**. For example, students who are available to take classes during the day greatly benefit from the current course scheduling and support services at most institutions, while working students who must take classes in the evening may struggle to get the courses and support they need.

“Most of the learning communities believe the linked models have better success. We only have two corequisite support sections that are open to the general population of students.

—English Department Chair

The disparity in education across student populations is apparent. Equity is a top priority for the college, but our college has a long way to go.

”

—English Faculty

Corequisite courses are designed to help close equity gaps and boost success and throughput rates, and two of these four colleges reported a connection between learning communities and enrollment in this type of support. These two colleges reported students in learning communities like **Umoja and Puente get to automatically enroll in transfer-level English with corequisite support**. The students in these learning communities tend to be from disproportionately impacted communities.

“Students in the Umoja learning community are enrolling in transfer-level courses with corequisite support, operating almost like a learning community within a learning community.

”

—Counselor

One college shared how it is **examining whether certain groups of students are being disproportionately placed into transfer-level courses with corequisite support**. Faculty expressed concerns that more students of color are required to take the credit support course compared to their White peers, causing these students to pay more for the same course, in addition to the extra time needed to complete both the lecture section and the support sections, time that could be used taking other general education (GE) courses. Early data indicated a disparity for Hispanic or Latina/o/x and African-American/Black students in terms of placement recommendations. Three colleges emphasized the importance of **offering noncredit corequisite courses so students who need the additional support are not penalized financially**.

# Recommendations

## **1. Ensure that equity is a key consideration in every decision.**

Interviewees expressed that equity is one of the most important issues on college campuses today. Despite increases in success rates and increases in the volume of disproportionately impacted populations successfully completing transfer-level math and English, equity gaps persist. Colleges reported how they are working to achieve equity by making it a component of major conversations and decisions on campus. Many colleges shared how they are using data to identify disproportionately impacted student groups to identify those who may need additional support. Other ways equity can be addressed includes faculty professional development, providing instructors with additional skills to teach students of all backgrounds and capacities; streamlining new processes to ensure they are as accessible as possible to all students; creating opportunities for faculty to share knowledge, experiences, and skills; and encouraging a shift in culture to apply an equity mindset to decision-making throughout the institution. Ultimately, equity is not necessarily a separate and distinct topic, but rather a lens through which all topics should be examined and understood.

## **2. Address faculty and staff concerns.**

For any new initiative to succeed, it must have the support of more than just the institutional leaders. Just as critical is the enthusiasm of those who have to implement new processes and programs on a daily basis. While this research project revealed that many community college faculty have embraced the idea of moving students more rapidly into transfer-level coursework, a substantial number of faculty remain reluctant to fully buy-in to AB 705 and all that this new mandate entails. Some are concerned that an excessive focus on direct entry into transfer-level coursework will leave some students behind, and others worry that investment of time and energy into AB 705 will go to waste when yet another new initiative rolls through the CCCs in a few years.

The success of AB 705 implementation will depend in large part on the enthusiastic participation of as many faculty and staff members as possible, including instructors, counselors, and assessment center coordinators, among others. In order to increase the level of buy-in across the institution, it is critical to take these concerns seriously and work to address them. Gathering and disseminating data (both local and statewide) that demonstrates the effectiveness of AB 705-related strategies is one approach to increasing buy-in, especially as more data become available over time. Additionally, acknowledgment that “initiative fatigue” is both real and fair could go a long way with reluctant faculty and staff. It would also be useful to demonstrate how AB 705 actually connects to work that has been done in the past as well as other current initiatives, which could help provide assurances that the premises behind AB 705 are not going to dissipate when the next trend in education emerges.

## **3. Make professional development available to all faculty, including part-time faculty.**

Numerous interviewees noted that changes to curriculum, support services, and educational structures required faculty to do things that may not be within their current body of knowledge or set of skills. Some instructional faculty are being asked to teach more advanced courses than

they have in the past, and others are facing challenges with a student population that has a greater diversity of preparedness than they are used to.

For these and many other reasons described in this report, professional development opportunities have become more critical than ever, especially for faculty members directly impacted by AB 705. Additionally, it is important that colleges remember to include part-time faculty in whatever professional development is made available, as they are an essential component of the teaching force at every college and are often tasked with teaching basic skills courses.

#### **4. Streamline processes to make them as simple, accessible, and student-centered as possible.**

The implementation of AB 705 has resulted in changes not only to course curriculum and support services, but to many logistical procedures as well. Students are now being asked to undergo guided or self-placement processes rather than taking a test and being told which math or English class was right for them. Many colleges now have multiple math pathways for students to navigate, and it is not always clear to students which course is the best fit for them. Moreover, students must manage the challenges of fitting both a primary course and its corequisite support course into their schedules for the first time.

As these and other changes to college systems and processes are rolled out, it is extremely important for colleges to look at them through the lens of the student's experience and ensure that they are as streamlined and simple as possible. For example, some colleges have already had success by linking the registration of transfer-level English and math courses with the corequisite support course, so any student enrolling in the former is automatically enrolled in the latter. It might be useful for instructional and counseling faculty to test these new processes by playing the role of students and seeing for themselves what confusion arises or hang-ups emerge. By undergoing the placement process, course selection process, and course/corequisite enrollment process themselves, they can more easily see where students might go wrong and how these systems can be adjusted to make the most sense for students.

#### **5. Collect and analyze feedback related to AB 705 to understand how it can be improved.**

Colleges need to ensure they are getting robust and ongoing feedback and are making changes accordingly. Colleges are recommended to conduct a comprehensive examination of their current processes, policies, and academic outcomes, reinforced by student, faculty, and staff perspectives and experiences to continue to refine and enhance the resources and supports offered. It is important to note here that, as is the case in Recommendation 3 above, part-time faculty must be included in the evaluation process. Further, the feedback and improvement cycle should be developed, implemented, and evaluated through an equity lens and include opportunities for all stakeholders to participate in all parts of the process to continuously create ownership and maintain support.

#### **6. Facilitate communication and collaboration among faculty, both within and across disciplines.**

Many interviewees noted that increased communication and collaboration among faculty was both one of the benefits of AB 705 and also one of the elements most crucial to effective implementation. Whether these communications take place among faculty within a particular

department, across academic disciplines, or between instruction and counseling, it is all critical to the successful implementation of AB 705.

As such, in order to lay the foundation for this success, colleges can facilitate communication and collaboration as much as possible. These efforts might include: creating time and opportunities for individuals who do not typically work together to share experiences, information, practices, and opinions; departments getting together to review data related to AB 705 from the previous semester and discussing what is and is not working; or bringing different departments who are working with a similar student population together to brainstorm strategies and highlight successes.

#### **7. Devote resources to making meaningful data available campus-wide in a timely manner.**

One of the most universal comments that emerged from the interviews was a desire for more data. Many interviewees were eager to see how data—both from their own institution and statewide—supported the successes and challenges they were experiencing in and out of the classroom. Unfortunately, data collection, analysis, and dissemination often lags behind implementation, especially when institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) offices are overwhelmed, as many are.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognize just how important having access to timely data is to assessing the implementation of AB 705, with faculty and staff testing new strategies each semester and needing to know what is working well and what is not. As such, it is critical that colleges devote as many resources as they can to staffing the IRPE office appropriately and ensuring that the office can dedicate adequate time not only to gathering information related to AB 705, but sharing that information in a digestible way with the entire campus, and aiding with the interpretation of these data.

#### **8. Support a shift in culture that highlights students' college-readiness.**

The colleges that had made the most progress to date in implementing AB 705 reported a shift on their campuses, away from a deficit mindset and towards a growth mindset. According to these colleges, this shift in culture that newly emphasized confidence in students' college-readiness was a significant component of the success of their students thus far. In order to build on this initial success, colleges can become more proactive and strategic about enacting this cultural shift, making sure that students know the institution has faith in them and believes they can thrive.

#### **9. Commit at all levels to equitable placement and closing equity gaps.**

A focus on closing longstanding equity gaps was a concern and commitment from all 14 colleges interviewed and many colleges shared that even with increased access to transfer-level courses, equity gaps remain. In order to collectively work towards closing equity gaps, a strong commitment from the Chancellor's Office that AB 705, equitable placement, and closing equity gaps require long-term commitments to this work, especially for those colleges that are suffering from initiative fatigue. The Chancellor's Office needs to invest in greater messaging and support to colleges to ensure that equitable placement is not seen as "another

initiative,” but instead as a reform effort that must be supported through ongoing professional development, and dedicated resources. Colleges must be given sufficient time to understand what is working, to change what is not working, and to evaluate those changes. Colleges need the Chancellor’s Office to continue and expand its commitment to support colleges as they work to ensure equitable placement and close equity gaps.

## Limitations

These findings are based on interviews with colleges who offered 80% or more or 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019. Fifty-percent of colleges (57 colleges) in the California Community Colleges system offered between 65% and 80% of transfer-level English and math sections and may be having different experiences implementing AB 705. Three colleges that were selected to be interviewed did not respond to the invitation. These three colleges were replaced by colleges that offered a similar proportion of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019.

The interviews were conducted between late January 2020 and mid-March 2020, before most colleges had begun the transition to virtual instruction and services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the findings and recommendations contained in this report are based on AB 705 implementation experiences in fall 2019 and early spring 2020.

Five interviews with colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 were scheduled for late March and cancelled due to COVID-19. Three of the five cancelled interviews came from colleges where more than five participants had already completed interviews. The other two cancelled interviews came from one college where only three participants were interviewed. Although all five cancelled interviews were with colleges that offered 65% or fewer transfer-level math and English sections in fall 2019, these colleges still made up half (50.6%) of the total interviews.

## Conclusion

This report summarizes the key findings and recommendations from interviews conducted with faculty, staff, and administrators from 14 colleges across the California Community Colleges system who played a key role in AB 705 implementation at their college. While this study represents only early indications, it highlights the significant progress that has been made to increase access, improve successful completion for students in transfer-level math and English, and identify obstacles colleges continue to face in ensuring equitable student outcomes.

A variety of themes emerged throughout the interviews as colleges shared both the positive outcomes and challenges encountered during the first official semester of full AB 705 implementation. The greatest challenges colleges faced while implementing AB 705 included communication, infrastructure and technology, and consensus building. This study also revealed a number of innovative strategies and approaches colleges are using to support student success in transfer-level math and English, including improvements to the placement process, curricular design, and wraparound services.

The findings from this study provide a qualitative look at effective practices and insights into the impact of AB 705 on colleges at different levels of implementation across the state, beyond what can be observed in the quantitative outcomes. These interviews bring to light important ideas and considerations on how to advance implementation moving forward and provided an opportunity for colleges to express some of the ways in which the state can strengthen their implementation efforts, including greater messaging and support to colleges to ensure that equitable placement is a long-term effort.



# Appendix: Methodology

This section provides a description of the methodology to create:

- a stratified sample of colleges using implementation data for the college selection process,
- the distribution of colleges across implementation groups and regions,
- a list of participating colleges by region,
- student demographics at participating colleges,
- a description of the interviews, and
- more information about the interviewees.

## College Sampling and Selection

A stratified random sample of colleges with 80% or more or 65% or fewer transfer-level English and math courses offered in fall 2019 were selected to participate in the interviews. The following process was used to produce the stratified sample:

- College implementation data with the proportion of entry-level transferable and non-transferable math and English sections offered in fall 2019 for 114 California Community Colleges<sup>17</sup> were sorted by the seven [Vision for Success](#) regional groups.
- The data from each college were categorized and coded according to the following schema:
  1. High implementation in both math and English (90%+ of sections of fall 2019 in both areas were at transfer-level)
  2. Moderately high implementation in both math and English (between 80-89% of sections in fall 2019 in both areas were at transfer-level)
  3. Moderately low implementation of math (65% or fewer of sections in fall 2019 were at transfer level) and moderate implementation of math and English (75% or fewer of sections in English and math combined were at transfer level)
  4. Low implementation of math (55% or fewer of sections in fall 2019 were at transfer level) and moderately low implementation of math and English (65% or fewer of sections in English and math combined were at transfer level)
  5. Not in groups 1, 2, 3 or 4
- One college with 80% or more transfer-level English and math courses offered in fall 2019 was selected from each region as follows:

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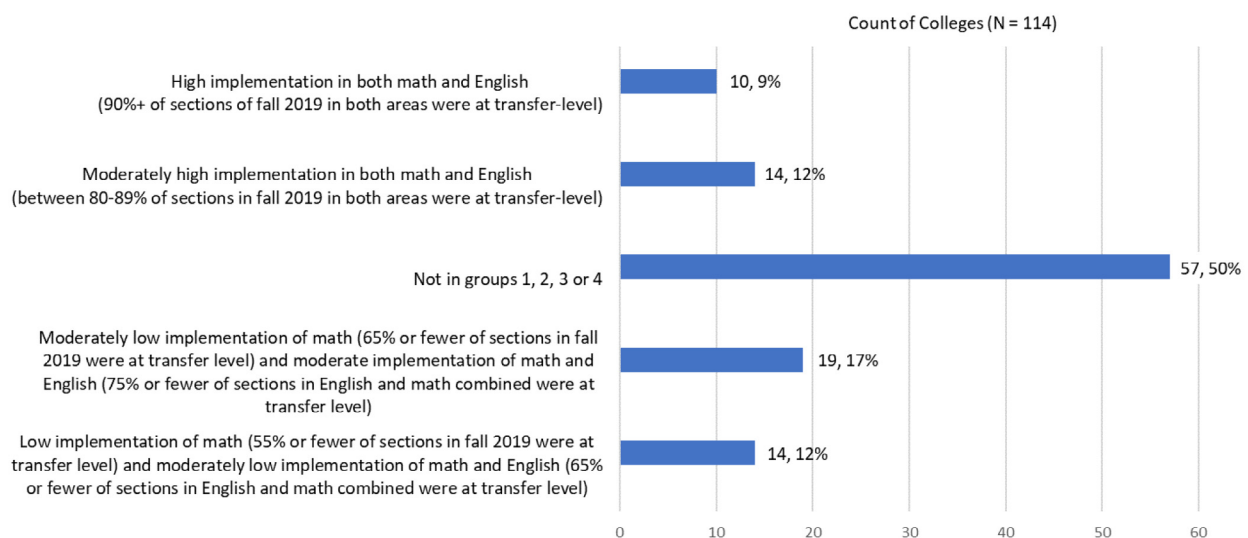
<sup>17</sup> Colleges' percentage of fall 2019 transfer-level coursework per *Getting There II: Are California community colleges maximizing student completion of transfer-level math and English? A Statewide Progress Report on Implementation of AB 705* (<https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Getting-There-II-FINAL.pdf>).

6. When a region had only one college in group 1, that college was selected as the high implementation example for that region.
  7. When there was more than one college in group 1, a random number between 1 and 100,000 was assigned to all colleges in group 1 using the uniform random number generation function in [SPSS](#), and the college with the lowest random number was selected.
  8. If a region had no colleges in group 1, then a college from group 2 was selected via the same process described for selecting a college from group 1.
- One college with a 65% or fewer of transfer-level English and math courses offered in fall 2019 was selected from each region as follows:
    9. When a region had only one college in group 4, that college was selected as the low implementation example for that region.
    10. When there was more than one college in group 4, a random number between 1 and 100,000 was assigned to all colleges in group 4 using the uniform random number generation function in SPSS, and the college with the lowest random number was selected.
    11. If a region had no colleges in group 4, then a college in group 3 was selected via the same process described for selecting a college from group 4.

The category creation process resulted in an approximately normal though slightly left-skewed distribution of colleges across the different categories, with a higher proportion of 65% or fewer colleges than 80% or more colleges (see Figure 1 below).

## College Distribution

**Figure 1.** Strength of AB 705 Implementation is Approximately Normally Distributed



Regional distribution among the categories varied somewhat. Notably, some regions had no colleges in group 1 and/or no colleges in group 4. Specifically, the Central/Mother Lode, San Diego/Imperial, and South Central Coast regions contained no group 4 colleges, while the North/Far North and San Diego/Imperial regions contained no group 1 colleges. When no group 1 or group 5 colleges were present in a region, the selection was made from the group 2 or group 4 colleges instead. A breakdown of categories by region is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Implementation Groups across Community Colleges in the Seven Regions

Implementation Groups	Region							Column Total
	Bay Area	Central/Mother Lode	Inland Empire/Desert	Los Angeles/Orange County	North/Far North	San Diego/Imperial	South Central Coast	
High implementation in both math and English (90%+ of sections of fall 2019 in both areas were at transfer-level)	1	4	1	3	0	0	1	10
Moderately high implementation in both math and English (between 80-89% of sections in fall 2019 in both areas were at transfer-level)	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	14
Not in groups 1, 2, 3 or 4	18	4	4	18	5	3	5	57
Moderately low implementation of math (65% or fewer of sections in fall 2019 were at transfer level) and moderate implementation of math and English (75% or fewer of sections in English and math combined were at transfer level)	3	3	1	4	3	4	1	19
Low implementation of math (55% or fewer of sections in fall 2019 were at transfer level) and moderately low implementation of math and English (65% or fewer of sections in English and math combined were at transfer level)	5	0	3	2	4	0	0	0
Row Total	28	14	12	28	15	9	8	114

**Table 2.** Geographic Region of Participating Colleges

Region	Participating Colleges
Central/Mother Lode	Merced, Porterville
Los Angeles/Orange County	Compton, Golden West
San Diego/Imperial	Cuyamaca, Southwestern

## Student Demographics

**Table 3.** Student Demographics for Participating Colleges

2019-2020 Student Headcount (%) Disaggregated by Ethnicity, Age Group, and Gender														
	Antelope Valley	Berkeley City	Compton	Cuyamaca	Desert	Feather River	Folsom Lake	Golden West	Laney	Merced	Porterville	Santa Barbara	Southwestern	Victor Valley
<b>Ethnicity</b>														
African American	15%	15%	21%	5%	2%	11%	4%	2%	19%	3%	1%	2%	4%	10%
Asian	2%	21%	3%	4%	2%	3%	11%	29%	26%	8%	2%	4%	3%	2%
Filipino	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	8%	1%
Hispanic	57%	26%	63%	34%	74%	36%	21%	32%	26%	58%	79%	34%	69%	58%
Multi-Ethnicity	4%	7%	2%	6%	2%	0%	6%	4%	5%	2%	2%	4%	4%	5%
Native American	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White Non-Hispanic	15%	22%	2%	44%	15%	40%	50%	24%	15%	18%	14%	33%	9%	22%
Unknown	4%	5%	6%	3%	2%	7%	4%	6%	6%	10%	0%	21%	2%	2%
<b>Age Group</b>														
19 or less	32%	30%	36%	29%	34%	23%	32%	33%	29%	35%	41%	38%	33%	39%
20 – 24	31%	32%	27%	31%	28%	22%	29%	34%	25%	29%	29%	31%	30%	28%
25+	37%	38%	37%	40%	38%	56%	39%	33%	47%	36%	30%	31%	37%	34%
<b>Gender</b>														
Female	57%	56%	64%	56%	56%	51%	54%	55%	54%	60%	63%	55%	56%	60%
Male	42%	41%	35%	43%	44%	47%	43%	42%	43%	39%	36%	43%	43%	40%

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information System Data Mart, Annual/Term Student Count Report, 2019-2020, report run on January 5, 2021.

## Interviews

The RP Group research team conducted 70 interviews via Zoom with 83 individuals from 14 colleges who played a key role in AB 705 implementation. Each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted with individuals, pairs, or groups based on the preference of the college and interviewees.

A minimum of five individuals were selected from each college who could speak to the implementation processes based on the following list of positions:

- Math department chair, statistics faculty member, or business/STEM faculty member
- English department chair or faculty member
- English as a Second Language (ESL) department chair or faculty member
- Academic Senate president or vice president
- Institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) dean/director
- Counselor
- Student services administrator
- Instructional administrator
- Assessment center coordinator/director
- Equity coordinator/director

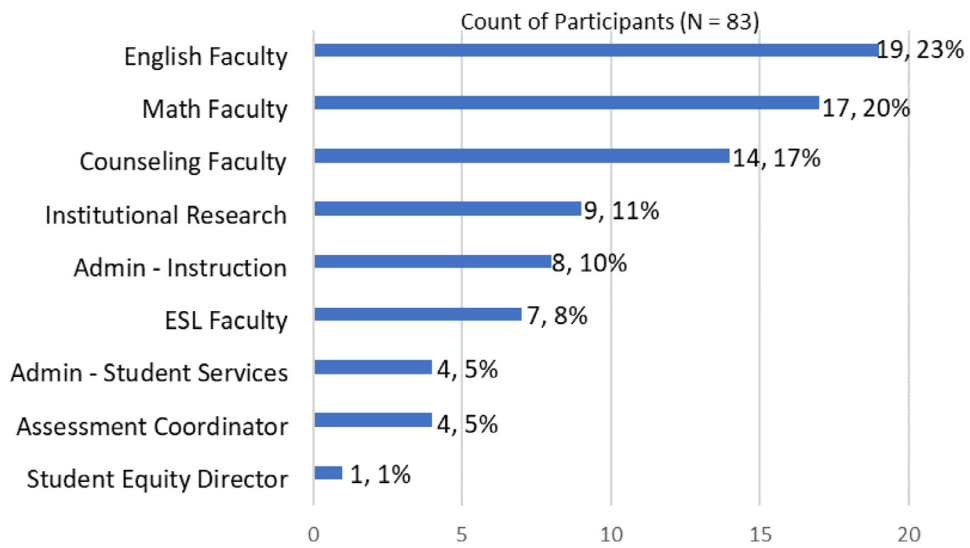
## Participants

Approximately half of the 83 participants came from colleges that offered 65% or fewer of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 (50.6%, 42 participants), and approximately half were from colleges that offered 80% or more of transfer-level English and math sections in fall 2019 (49.4%, 41 participants). The participants included 57 faculty from English, math, counseling, and ESL; nine representatives from institutional research; eight administrators from instruction; four administrators from student services; four assessment/placement coordinators' and one student equity director (see Figure 3).

Twenty-three (41%) faculty interviewed were department chairs at the time of the interview, including ten (59%) math faculty, four (57%) ESL faculty, seven (37%) English faculty, and two (14%) counseling faculty. The faculty interviewed included three AB 705 coordinators, two basic skills coordinators, one Puente coordinator, one Guided Pathways Coordinator, three academic senate leaders, three disabled student Programs and services (DSPS) counselors, one learning disabilities specialist, one Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) counselor, and one Veterans counselor.

Participants from institutional research included four deans, three directors, and two analysts. Administrators from instruction included two vice presidents, two deans of liberal arts, two deans of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), one dean of English and humanities, and one Program Manager. Administrators from student services included two Vice Presidents, two deans.

**Figure 3.** Participants' Primary Role



# The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges

The RP Group strengthens the ability of California community colleges to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

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